PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: The security problem has been in existence for quite some time. It did not just come before 1989 or after 1991.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Are you taking care of it?

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: What loopholes have been detected by the Government itself without the help of the Commission or may be by an earlier Commission?

SHRI S. B. CHAVAN: Sir, whatever lapses or shortcomings the Government finds, certainly we try to apply correctives. But I won't be in a position to tell him about it nor is it necessary for me to give all the details to the House because they are very secret matters. The person to whom the security is being provided, if the details are divulged, then, it loses all the significance.

PROF. SOURENDRA BHATTACHARJEE: Can he seek protection under such a plea?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Q. No. 122.

भारत में बने टेलीफोन संयंत्रों का अमरीका सरकार द्वारा खरीदा जाना

*122. **श्री राम जेठमलानी :**

डा० जिनेन्द्र कुमार जैन :†

क्या संचार मंत्री यह बताने की कृपा करेंगे कि :

(क) क्या यह सच है कि अमरीका सरकार ने हाल ही में भारत में बने कुछ टेलीफोन संयंत्रों को खरीदने का प्रस्ताव रखा है ;

(ख) यदि हां, तो ऐसे संयंत्रों की कुल संख्या कितनी है और वे कितने मूल्य पर खरीदे जायेंगे ;

(ग) क्या सरकार इस मांग को पूरा करने की स्थिति में है ; और

(घ) यदि हां, तो सरकार द्वारा इस मांग के कब तक पूरा किये जाने की संभावना है और इस सौदे में कितना मुनाफा कमाने की संभावना है ?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) Does not arise.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Sir, before I put my first supplementary. I would like to point out a mistake done by the Translation Department of the Rajya Sabha Secretariat. My question was in Hindi and the words used for my original language was "संपर्क" .But when the translation was done it was put as "plants". Before I put my question to the hon. Minister, I would like to be reassured by him that he has not taken advantage of this mistake done by the Secretariat while answering the question because the answer that is provided protects him. If he reads the translation...

MR. CHAIRMAN: There is a correction in the English version.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: My first question was "Whether it is a fact that the U.S. Government have recently offered to purchase some telephone plants manufactured in India;". He says "No, Sir." So I just want an assurance from him that he understood my question correctly. Then, I would put my question to him.

THE MINISTER OF STATE (INDEPENDENT CHARGE) OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI RAJESH PILOT): Whatever question has been put to the Department, the information is available with me and I can give it to the hon. Member. If he wants to put any supplementary, I am ready to clarify it.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He says his question is about the telephone instruments. Have you answered about the telephone instru-

†The question was actually asked on the floor of the House by Dr. Jitendra Kumar Jain.

ments? There was a news item in the papers that you are proposing to sell some telephone instruments. That is why, I think, he has put the question.

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: What is the basic answer? Is it the same for plant and instruments?

MR. CHAIRMAN: Don't confuse, please.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Let me put my question, Sir. Here, today, on the floor of this House, the hon. Minister says, "No, Sir", to my question whether the U.S. has recently offered to purchase telephone instruments from this country. But, in a press note which is published in the 'Times of India' on July 14—and the source is his Ministry—it is said, "U.S. to buy Indian phones". It says that it is for the first time that the U.S. is trying to buy a large number of phones and at a rate of 16 dollars each. It says it is a big order. My first question is this. The same Ministry tells different things to the press and Parliament. Why?

MR. CHAIRMAN: We depend on what he says in Parliament.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Sir, the press and Parliament are two important instruments of the functioning of Indian democracy. The same Government informs the press and Parliament. It has to have not only responsibility but consistency also. Within a period of one month, the information supplied to the press and Parliament is so different. On one side, you go to the people and paint such a nice picture. (*Interruption*).

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Sir, unless he sits down, how can the Minister reply?

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: You always keep interrupting me and if I start interrupting you, you will run away from this House.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: He will never run away. Don't worry.

MR. CHAIRMAN: He will not run away. He is a permanent feature of our House. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN: He is old. He cannot run away.

SHRI VITHALRAO MADHAVRAO JADHAV: He has been there for the last 24 years. How can he run away?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Mr. Chairman Sir, I gather from the hon. Member's question that he feels that we have said something outside in the press that the U.S. is buying telephones or telephone instruments from us, but in answer to the question here, we are saying, "No, Sir". I am afraid there is some sort of communication gap between me and the hon. Member. I really do not know which section of the press he is quoting. I remember that I have spoken to the press that we are trying to increase exports from our department and we have constituted cell. (*Interruption*).

AN HON. MEMBER: Sir, he is supplying some information to the hon. Minister.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Thank you.

SHRI YASHWANT SINHA: Does contain the answer that he wants?

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Sir, is the paper laid on the Table or in the Minister's hands?

MR. CHAIRMAN: This is in the pre

SHRI A. G. KULKARNI: Is the paper laid on the Table? Have you permitted him? Or, is it in the hands of the Minister? Sir, you have reply (*Interruption*

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sir, this is some article in some newspaper where they have said, "Sources close to the Union Ministry of Telecommunications". The hon. Member can help me in regard to the sources. Anyway, the intention is the same. I want to convey that we have been trying to raise whatever little requirement we have for foreign exchange in our department. We had a Rs. 140 core foreign exchange requirement for a component. Our expansion could not take off speed because of the shortage of foreign exchange. So, when I took over, I told the press. I have said that we will

to export, at least to the extent of that quantity, our instruments or whatever requirements foreign countries have so that we can meet the foerign exchange requirement of our department. That was the sole aim . The question is not about the Government. Some telephone instruments have been ordered for by one of the firms in the U.S. It is also said that 6000 telephones have been ordered for by one private company of America from one of the private companies in India. In any case, in totality, we get foreign exchange. So we are trying to increase our exports. We have already constituted a separate cell in our Ministry so that exports can be enhanced and the requirement for foreign exhcange components, in respect of communication especially, can be met. That is the total thrust of the department, for earning foreign exchange.

MR. CHAIRMAN: May I make it clear? (*Interruptions*). Just a minute. His explanation is that there is no order from the U.S. Government. In the U.S., telecommunication is in private hands. They may have ordered. I don't know. That is the question.

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: They have placed order for 6,000 telephones with a private firm. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: So the matter ends there. He has cleared the confusion. (*Interruptions*).

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sir, I can give the name of the firm. The name of the Indian firm is Bharati Telecom Ltd. and the name of the American firm is Premia Telephones. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: Now the two have been reconciled.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Sir, when I had asked this question, my expetcation was not that the hon. Minister would lead the House to a confusion. (*Interruptions*).

MR. CHAIRMAN: No, no. But you put the word 'Government'. (*Interruptions*).

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Sir, my supplementary is, does the Government agree that there lies an export potential in the Telecom sector equipment? If the Government thinks that there is export potential of the telephone instruments being manufactured in India either by the public sector or by the private sector, what steps the Government is taking to develop this potential? Does the Government agree that the century-old Indian Telegraph Act is providing a major deterrent to create conditions which will help integrating our nation with the international market? So there is a century-old Indian Telegraph Act but today's technology has cerated an altogether different situation.

MR. CHAIRMAN: So your question is, will he amend this Act so that the telephone equipment could be sold?

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: If he says yes, there is a potential, then he has to come to the root of the problem and has to come to the House with an amendment of the century-old Indian Telegraph Act. Is he doing something about it?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Mr. Chairman, Sir, it is a fact that the scope of enhancing our export specially in the telecom sector in the Middle East and some of the East European countries is very good. We are having a very encouraging response and sensing that response, we have already tried to establish a cell, specially on commercial lines, not on bureaucratic lines that we send a team and they meet the officers and come back. We want to establish a commercial set-up in the Ministry which can boost up our exports in this department. The second part of the hon. Member's question is very right and this was the first thrust after the new Government started functioning. We have realised that this is a very old Act and we have already set up a Committee. We are on the process to review it and amend it, not clause-by-clause but in total. We will take care of the overall view of the Act. It has been a very old Act and if the progressive attitude has to be brought in the Communications Department, then it is needed today.

MR. CHAIRMAN: You are trying to do that?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Yes, we are trying to do it.

DR. JINENDRA KUMAR JAIN: Since there is an urgency in the sphere of balance of payments crisis and everything, are you willing to specify sometime within which you will bring an amendment to the Act?

SHRI RAJESH PILOT: Sir, there are two ways of doing it. Anything which is immediately needed for the progress of the department or in the interest of nation, we can bring an amendment to that particular clause. But if you want to review the whole Act, then it will take some time. There is a Committee set up so that it is amended not for the next two or three years but for the next thirty-forty years so that we do not have to review it every five years or ten years. So it is a short term as well as long term planning. If the hon. Member has got anything in mind for a particular clause he is most welcome to write to me and I will take action on that.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Shri Rajni Ranjan Sahu.

Do you want to put question on Question No. 123?

SHRI RAJNI RANJAN SAHU: Yes, Sir.

S.T.D. facilities in Delhi

*123. SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is any proposal to provide STD P.C.O. facilities in Tilak Nagar, Model Town and other places in Delhi where such facilities are not available;

(b) whether it is a fact that a large number of PCOs in Delhi are always faulty;

(c) if so, what steps are taken by Government to mitigate the grievances of the public;

(d) whether Government have taken any steps for speedy disposal of telephone complaints, which are inordinately delayed by the Telephone Department; and

(e) whether Government have any programme to replace the manual exchanges in rural area by Auto/Computerised exchanges?

THE DEPUTY MINISTER IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI P. V. RANGAYYA NAIDU): (a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

Statement

(a) Sir, 8 STD PCOs in Tilak Nagar and 2 STD PCOs in Model Town area are already functioning. In Delhi 516 STD PCOs are working as on date. These PCOs cover almost all important areas and localities in Delhi.

(b) and (c) Most of the PCOs in Delhi are normally operational. A few PCOs become inoperative some time due to vandalism, cable thefts and other reasons. All the PCOs are treated as important telephones and tested daily from the exchange. They are also inspected physically from time to time.

(d) Fault Repair Service is being progressively computerised to ensure better follow up of the complaints/faults. External and internal plants are also being modernised to reduce the incidence of complaints.

(e) Yes, Sir. All the manual exchanges are planned to be replaced by automatic exchanges by 1995.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Sir, first of all, I seek your protection. There is no "Ramcandran" in the House, I think. I am Ramachandran. And who sabotaged this, I don't know.

MR. CHAIRMAN: They have changed it. An errata has been issued.

SHRI S. K. T. RAMACHANDRAN: Anyhow, I condone the error, Sir.

MR. CHAIRMAN: Your name is corrected now.